

**THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Tuesday, October 25, 2018**  
**Thetford Elementary School**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

Shannon Darrah convened the meeting at 6:35 p.m. The following were present: Julie Acker (arrived 6:37 p.m.), Charlie Buttrey, Shannon Darrah, Kristen Downey, Scott MacPhee, School Board; Colin McLaughlin, Interim TES Principal; Bruce Williams, OESU Assistant Superintendent

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Stuart Rogers, Tim Briglin

**AGENDA REVIEW:** Agenda approved with amendments.

**MINUTES REVIEW: MOTION:** (Acker/MacPhee) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the September 25, 2018 Board meeting (Downey and Buttrey abstained; unanimous approval).

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS: MOTION:** (Acker/MacPhee) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable orders # 6732, 6716, 6722, 6710, 6712, and 6664, and payroll warrant # 6731 and report # 21521 (unanimous approval).

**PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE:** The Board received an email from parent Jasmine Tremblay regarding an incident related to bus driver demeanor on Bus #3. Bruce Williams contacted Butler Bus Company regarding the incident and responded to Ms. Tremblay. Williams stated it is appropriate to report bus incidents to the Principal, Board Chair or to himself. He is currently handling transportation issues. Williams does not understand exactly what happened. Ms. Tremblay is in touch with the bus company. Investigation is ongoing.

**TA REPORT:** Darrah reported 30 minutes of the last TA meeting was dedicated to a visit and discussion about the art program. There was an update from the head of school search committee. The job ad is out for candidates. The strategic plan is nearing completion and has been sent out for comments. The Board did some policy work. The Board formally voted to adopt the Lyme partnership agreement. The admissions policy was amended, and language was added regarding Lyme students having greater exposure to TA when they are considering high school options. Admission is guaranteed for Lyme and Strafford in 9<sup>th</sup> grade only. There has been discussion about approaching other schools with a large population at TA regarding a partnership. Partnership is different from a designation.

**PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Colin McLaughlin):** The open house was well attended and McLaughlin received positive feedback. The bike track is complete for now. Rivendell's 6<sup>th</sup> grade class visited the compost system with guidance from a tour created by Ms. Kendall and Joette. Next week Thetford will be presenting at the Wellborne conference at Lake Morey about

the gardens and composting, followed by an optional on site tour. Teachers had Bridges math training. Teachers from the Hinesdale School observed. McLaughlin received a nice thank you note.

**UPDATE ON FACILITIES:** School closed early last Tuesday due to a leaky back flow preventer in the boiler room, which caused cascading water from the ceiling, and necessitated turning off the water to prevent flooding. The process of closing the school while school was in session was successful and school was open the following day. Buttrey asked if insurance covers this. Williams will investigate. McLaughlin reported the problem was quickly addressed with an easy, inexpensive fix with no damage because it was an exposed pipe. Williams was extremely helpful during the process. Williams reflected that it was a useful practice to need to contact parents in the absence of a true emergency. Some issues with the blackboard connect communications system were uncovered related to how it grabs numbers out of the student information system. The system is being adjusted. McLaughlin stated there have been five consecutive days of intermittent lack of hot water. The problem was repaired and then re-occurred the next day. The problem has been solved, but it is a good idea to buy a new hot water heater, which had been recommended earlier. An electric hybrid hot water heater, researched and ordered by Rogers, will be installed on November 9 when school is not in session due to a conference day. The current heater is oil. There will be cost savings due to the solar array. A related problem was discovered in the oil feeding system regarding the separator cans as oil is entering the building. The filters were found to contain water, which could be the cause of the hot water problem. The hot water heater investigation lead to a revisit of issues related to the oil lines, which were replaced last summer. The tank sensors still needed to be replaced. D&M Petroleum came to update the sensors, which cost \$2,000. The hot water heater lines are working. The boiler was started last week and all is fine. In the kitchen, the dishwasher booster failed and needs replacement. This is the piece that heats up the water in the dishwasher. Sheila contacted EcoLab. The dishwasher itself is in good shape. Darrah stated that since TASP uses the dishwasher, they are willing to share the cost of the repair. McLaughlin stated TASP did contribute one third of the cost. Darrah stated TASP Board Chair, Scott Hesser, said TASP would be willing to help pay for a new dishwasher. The dishwasher should be included on the facilities long term plan. Rogers reported that Advanced Onsite Services performed their septic inspection and filed their report. Previous changes had been made without permitting and triggered a letter from the state. The test to assess the sand filter and pumps' pressure failed with a temporary pump. A recent email from AOS said their computer system model indicated that in order for the system to work without replacing the laterals in the sand filter, the sand filter zones would need to be doubled from 3 to 6 zones and it would necessary to increase the pumps from half quarts to three quarter quarts. The cost would be \$8,500. It will need a new engineering letter because the former engineer was acquired by another company who has the records of the previous work. Ideally this work should be completed before snow cover. Discussion followed regarding funding. The tanks were also inspected with a sludge dip test. The recommendation is definitely tank 1 and maybe tank 2 should be pumped. McLaughlin stated the work will be done on November 9. A cracked cement cap needs replacement with either a cement cover, or a green cap that would be flush to the grass to avoid a protruding cement cap. The Board agreed to replace

both caps. Williams reminded the Board that TTSD is expecting a special education surplus. It is uncertain if these repairs can be funded from this surplus, but in the meantime with Board approval, the expenses can be paid from the capital reserve fund, with money from special education reimbursement transferred back to the reserve fund. Williams will review with the OESU financial office staff. McLaughlin reported the radios have been ordered at a final cost of \$3,200. ~\$2,800 was covered by grant money. TES is short a custodian and the remaining custodians are over worked. Scott needs to be trained on the machine that cleans the gym floor to avoid the big job of mopping by hand. Williams suggested checking the other SU schools for a similar floor machine for help with instruction. It will be important for basketball season. McLaughlin has asked the custodians for a list of outstanding jobs. Philip O'Donnell, who mows the lawn, has been very helpful in many extra ways.

**Proposed Parking Lot and Drop off:** Rogers reported the plans will be sent to the state for approval. A remaining question is the timing of the storm water run off analysis because it is related to the parking lot renovation. McLaughlin has not heard again from the Agency of Natural Resources since the initial complaint. He will follow up. McLaughlin stated he and Chief Evans noted the 8:00 to 8:45 restricted entry into the loop in front of TES. The closure time could be changed to end at 8:20 because the buses are usually gone by then. This would allow parents who are running late to enter this area and drop off their students at the door, and would alleviate congestion in the parking lot. This needs further discussion. Williams expressed concerns and suggested caution about allowing drop offs in the loop based on dangerous occurrences happening at other schools. Rogers added that in the winter the timing in the loop might be different because buses may arrive late. Discussion followed regarding drop off logistics. McLaughlin met with Donn Downey and Chief Evans. Downey compiled a summary of traffic flow patterns and offered ideas about how to make the traffic flow safer. McLaughlin distributed Downey's drawings. When the parking lot is being renovated this summer, it is an opportunity to make it safer. An optional add-on is an electric car charging station. Acker expressed support for a composting toilet.

**STAFFING CHANGES/UPDATES:** Laura Sharpless submitted her FMLA paperwork. Her baby is now home with her. A 0.5 math interventionist, Ashley Jamele, is starting October 31 and will be working just with the students. The teacher coaching piece will be delayed until Sharpless returns. A new para will start soon, working four days per week to support grades 5 and 6. This is a new position because of the influx of new students over the summer. TES sought a Spanish speaker without success and hired a Portuguese speaker. There is a 6<sup>th</sup> grader who is Spanish speaking and this para will help with socialization. McLaughlin had previously discussed need for a new special educator for an intensive needs student in Kindergarten. Several candidates were interviewed but McLaughlin could not find anyone suitable. The OESU special education coordinator suggested to contract with SD Associates. Two people will share the job with guidance from SD Associates in addition to a full time one-to-one aide in his own classroom and with as much assimilation into the mainstream as possible. All the involved professionals recommended this as the best model for this student. There are three preschool students with similar profiles who are expected to enroll soon. The special education reimbursement rate is the

same for contracting out. The Spanish teacher resigned on October 3. Her last day was October 17. McLaughlin tried to work through her concerns and to help her understand the TES population. She had a difficult time delivering her content in the way she wished. The school considered making Spanish an elective, but the staff was not in favor. At that point the Spanish teacher decided she needed to resign. This is a difficult position to fill. The job has been posted. There are three people interviewing next week who do not have Spanish endorsement or licensure but they are experienced educators and could get emergency licensure. Buttrey asked if classroom teachers are present during Spanish. McLaughlin explained in the past Spanish has been on a cart moving from room to room. Since there was an available classroom this year, Spanish had its own room. Paras were going with students to Spanish class. For some classes the Spanish teacher opted to come into the classroom. McLaughlin hopes to observe candidates teaching a lesson, ideally in a current setting. One candidate is teaching currently and could be observed. The worst thing that could happen would be to lose another Spanish teacher mid-year.

**MOTION:** (Acker/Buttrey) moved/seconded to accept the resignation (unanimous approval). Rogers asked why TES does not teach French given proximity to Quebec? Buttrey explained that when TTSD was first considering a language program, they sought the most qualified candidate and found a French teacher. The next most qualified teacher taught Spanish. McLaughlin discussed TES' language program with Bugg, and reported Bugg felt that TES kids coming in with Spanish is a nice conduit into TA because of how the students are grouped. Buttrey asked McLaughlin if he is taking care of himself during these busy times with multiple facilities and staffing challenges. McLaughlin stated he is enjoying his position more now. He is glad he has learned a lot about TES's facilities

**ACT 46 UPDATE:** Darrah reported the State Board of Education met and affirmed TTSD can continue as its own district. Blue Mountain can also continue as is. Oxbow, Bradford and Newbury have to merge, and will have one Board which could impact Thetford's representation on the OESU Board. Acker stated she expects there will be a transitional committee before this one Board is created. Hartland and Sharon are also allowed to remain as their own districts. There is no decision on Waits River yet, but is expected to be allowed to remain as is. Williams stated that at the November 6 OESU meeting, the Superintendent will give a brief overview of the constituent Board relationships to the SU and each other.

**Financial oversight webinar:** Acker reminded the Board of questions raised regarding TTSD's current procedure for review, approval and signing of orders. The VSBA suggested a webinar which Acker recently attended. Acker learned that TTSD's procedure of having a majority of the Board signing orders is overdone, and lends itself to the potential for micromanaging by the board. It usually takes place after the money has been spent anyway. Acker recommended updating the policies on financial oversight to the current VSBA model policy, and then creating a Board procedure in which one person is assigned to review and approve the warrants before they are sent to the Treasurer's office. There can be a back up person. Orders do not need review at every meeting. Buttrey stated he does like going through the orders book. The budget has already been approved, and it is up to the business office to do the rest. Williams stated all six boards he has worked with in the past had one person in charge of signing and one back up

person. The OESU board does it this way, though all boards within the SU do it the way TTSD does. Discussion followed. Williams reported that at the November 6 OESU meeting VSBA will present a process for reviewing policy. Discussion followed. Acker plans to discuss with Cynthia O'Dell and Tracy Borst in order to establish the work flow from which TTSD can develop a procedure.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION (Teacher Negotiations):** MOTION: (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 8:14 p.m. to discuss teacher negotiations, the premature dissemination of which may place the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Out of executive session at 8:22 p.m. No action taken.

**ADJOURNMENT:** MOTION: (MacPhee/Buttrey) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m. (unanimous approval).

**FUTURE MEETINGS:**

11/06/18	OESU Meeting	6:00 p.m.
11/13/18	Thetford Town School District Meeting	6:30 p.m.
11/27/18	Thetford Town School District Meeting	6:30 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By:  
Amy Bosco, Minutes Clerk

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

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Julie Acker, Board Clerk